US Army Corps of Engineers
Fort Worth District

News Release

Release No. CESWF-PA-02-049 Contact: Judy Marsicano

For Release: Immediate 12 Jul 02 Phone: (817) 832-3642

Situation Update - Canyon Lake flooding

FORT WORTH, TX – Officials of the Fort Worth District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, announced today that it will be about 3 weeks before any releases can be made from the Canyon Lake outlet works. Releases are being delayed due to rock and debris in the outlet works stilling basin and in the downstream Guadalupe River channel.

Spillway flows up to 67,000 cubic feet per second (cfs) and the tremendous energy generated when the water surged through the spillway channel downstream caused large rocks to be exposed and carried down into the main river channel. Lower flows through the spillway channel have exposed massive amounts of rock and debris in the main river channel downstream at the intersection of the spillway channel.

Yesterday, volunteer divers, under direction of the Corps of Engineers, discovered a significant amount of rocks and debris in the outlet works stilling basin. Emergency contract procedures have begun and rock and debris removal will begin in the next few days. Because of the magnitude of rocks and debris found in these two areas and the difficulty in determining the quantity of the material in the river channel while spillway flows continue, the time required to remove it is uncertain. During this time period, it is unlikely that releases will be made from the outlet works. The rocks and debris have blocked the channel downstream and increased backwater elevations so that releases from the outlet works would result in excessive turbulence and damage to the structure of the outlet works and stilling basin.

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By excavating a drainage channel through the rocks in the mainstem channel downstream, the backwater effect will be lowered and releases can be resumed from the outlet works. Once flows from the outlet works are commenced, two months or more will be required to empty the flood pool.

Currently, there is approximately 5,000 cfs flowing over the spillway. The lake elevation is slightly above 944.5 feet mean sea level, approximately 1.5 feet over the spillway. Canyon Dam is performing as designed and is structurally sound.

The Corps' analysis of this event shows that had Canyon Dam not been in place, the flows in the Guadalupe River downstream would have crested three times between July 4 and July 6, at flows in excess of 80,000 cfs. With the dam in place, the peak flow at New Braunfels on July 5 was approximately 69,300 cfs. Had Canyon Dam not been constructed, flows would have been greater than 126,000 cfs.

Peak flows at Cuero reached 64,700 cfs and 72,600 cfs at Victoria. Without Canyon Dam, flows at Cuero would have been about 103,000 cfs and about 113,000 cfs at Victoria. Initial estimates indicate that damages prevented at New Braunfels were $38.6 million, $1.6 million at Cuero and $6.1 million at Victoria.